

## **Section 15. Travel Expenses**

Town employees and officials will occasionally be involved in out-of-town travel to attend schools, business meetings, conferences, etc. All reasonable expenses (mileage, meals, lodging, etc.) will be reimbursed on a per diem basis in accordance with the guidelines provided in this section.

For other than elected officials or emergency situations, travel on Town business requiring an overnight stay must be authorized by the Town Manager prior to the trip. Any such travel not approved by the Town Manager will be at the expense of the employee.

Per diem allocations for all approved travel will be made in accordance with the following guidelines:

### **a. Lodging**

1. Where approved travel dictates that the employee secure overnight lodging, the lodging will be paid per diem, or may be paid on the Town credit card at a rate not to exceed the cost of a medium-priced single room. All requests for lodging per diem allocations or payments made with the Town credit card must be accompanied by a receipt.
2. Lodging expenses may be authorized for the date preceding the official start of the approved function where travel from Blowing Rock on the opening day would necessitate a departure time before 6:30 a.m.; and may be authorized for the night that the function ends provided that travel back to Blowing Rock would result in a return time after 10:00 p.m. Exceptions must be approved by the Town Manager prior to the event. Unless approved by the Town Manager, lodging secured within 60 miles of Blowing Rock will not be paid.
3. Where an employee is accompanied by a member of his or her family or other acquaintance, reimbursement will only be made at the rate for a single room. The single rate must be listed on the lodging receipt.

### **b. Meals**

1. Per diem allocation for breakfast will be made for days of departure and return if departure from the Town is prior to 7:00 a.m. or if return to the Town is after 8:00 a.m.
2. Per diem allocation for lunch will be made for days of departure and return if departure from the Town is prior to 12:00 noon or if return to the Town is after 1:00 p.m.
3. Per diem allocation for dinner will be made for days of departure and return if departure from the Town is prior to 5:00 p.m. or return is after 7:00 p.m.
4. Other meals while on out-of-town travel will be at the per-diem rate stipulated in Appendix A. Special meals directly associated with a conference, workshop, seminar, or other job-related activity, may be reimbursed in excess of the per-diem rates. In addition, the Town Manager may also authorize meal reimbursements in excess of the per-diem rates when an employee travels into a "high cost" area.

### **c. Transportation**

1. Compensation will be authorized for that mode of travel that is in the best interest of the Town. Generally, that will mean the most cost-effective mode of travel.

2. An employee using his or her own vehicle will be paid at the per diem rate stipulated in Appendix A. On trips where a Town vehicle is used, reimbursement will be made for purchases of gasoline, oil, or emergency repairs when receipts are presented. For both private and public vehicles, reimbursement for parking and toll charges will be allowed. Costs for traffic fines or parking violations are not reimbursable.
3. When air transportation is authorized, compensation will be made for "coach" air fare. If the desired point of destination is not served by air, fare to the nearest city will be allowed along with round-trip taxi fare or rental car fees to the final destination.
4. No matter what mode of travel is authorized, expenses for local transportation, such as bus or taxi fares, will be reimbursed when such expenses are necessary for approved functions.
5. For payment of transportation expenses, receipts must be provided if practicable.

No employee will receive reimbursement for alcoholic beverages, entertainment expenses, personal items, or expenses incurred on behalf of another person, except as may be provided in Section 9.04.

Before leaving, or within five (5) workdays after return for an approved trip an employee must complete an expense report, itemizing the expenses that are expected to be incurred on the trip. It is the responsibility of the employee, when traveling as a representative of the Town at Town expense, to keep sufficient records of any costs incurred that were not taken into account before the trip to allow the itemization and verification of expenses. Attached to the report must be receipts for any additional expenses incurred as required. The report must be approved by the appropriate supervisor prior to reimbursement. A copy of mileage from Mapquest or other such internet site is required to support mileage request.